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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## THE MANUFACTURE OF SEVRES.—II.

Translated from the French of Edward Garnier, by Louise C. Mariotte.



HAVING shown in a previous article the differences which exist between the porcelains comprising the four divisions of the Catalogue of the Sèvres Exposition, we shall proceed to study them separately, commencing with the last two groups which are much the most interesting and which mark a progress full of promise for the future—Porcelaine Tendre Nouvelle and Grosse Porcelaine.

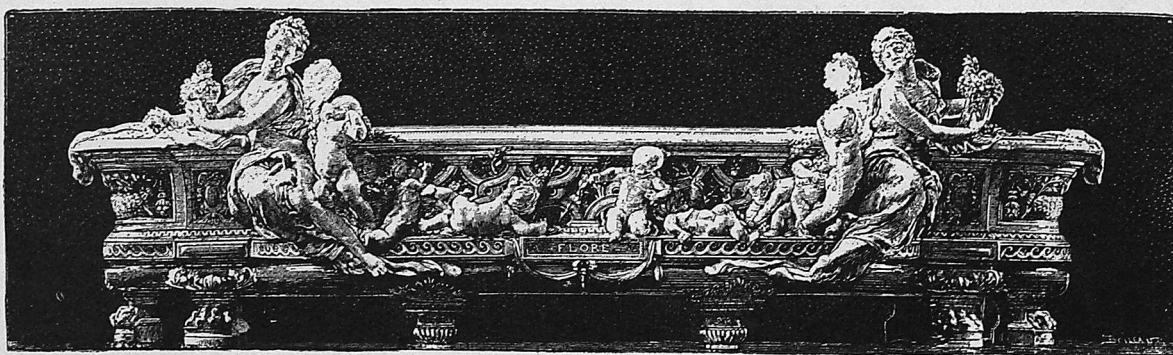
As we have stated, Porcelaine Tendre, such as was manufactured in the last century, and to which Sèvres owes in part its great reputation, was the result of

manipulations which the workmen transmitted to each other and which it had not been thought necessary to note—were absolutely lost; this attempt was then abandoned after a few years.

M. Theodore Deck, who has added to our industry the production of those marvellous surfaces of the porcelains from the East, being now called to take the direction of the establishment, said to himself that as Sèvres had formerly manufactured a porcelain much preferable for its artistic qualities to that which had replaced it, it could do so again, and that that manufacture, according to the law of progress, ought under all conditions to be superior to the old.

It was an arduous task, but one to which M. Deck felt in honor bound for the great profit of French industry. Notwithstanding the short time which has elapsed since he has taken the direction of the establishment, and the opening of the Exposition, he has been able to present a series of pieces which do great credit to this able and indefatigable worker.

Certainly these porcelains are not yet perfect; they have not that milky softness, and, if one may so speak, depth, which make



JARDINIÈRE CHERET.

the combination of diverse materials reduced to a friable condition then formed into a paste which was varied by the moulders and turners according to the nature and form of the piece to be executed. The paste thus prepared was dry, short, lacked plasticity, and was worked with difficulty; in consequence serious accidents were often produced in the baking. It was besides impossible to employ it for the execution of large pieces, and to obtain vases which would exceed from 60 to 65 centimetres in height, although these vases were always in two or three parts. To these defects another was added, one of considerable importance, especially as regarded porcelain for domestic use—the enamel cracked and wore off easily.

Is it not astonishing that the incontestable qualities which from an artistic point of view, constitute the great superiority of Porcelaine Tendre, were not able to contend against the advantages which the Kaolinque Porcelaine presented, and that Brongniart ordered by Napoleon to execute several monumental pieces designed to commemorate the victories of the Grand Army and the great acts of his reign—should have substituted the manufacture of Porcelaine Dure for that of Porcelaine Tendre and allowed the latter to be completely sacrificed.

Towards 1860, Régnault, administrator of the manufactory, in answer to a desire expressed from those in authority, again undertook the manufacture of Porcelaine Tendre, but with little success. Formulæ of the paste and the exact doses of the matters which entered into its composition, had been well preserved in the archives of the manufactory; but all that which constituted the "Secrets of Sèvres"—as they were called in the last century—secrets which in reality reposed only upon certain

the great charm of the old Louis XV porcelains, but the manufacture is irreproachable, the enamel is clear and well penetrated by the colors. The first pieces exhibited were experimental pieces, and M. Deck was not deceived as to the merit more or less great, of his own productions. He frankly acknowledged what was lacking in his new porcelain. He resumed his researches, altered the composition of the paste, and a little vase, of certainly very modest appearance, but of considerable importance from a technical



DECORATING THE VASES.



MOUNTING ROOM.

point of view, which has been recently exhibited at the Champ de Mars, proves that if the problem is not yet solved, it is at least very nearly being so. Simply decorated in free hand, with a branch of nasturtium in blossom, this little piece is in all respects admirable—never was more beautiful material decorated with purer or stronger colors, and the manufactory may preserve it in its museum with a legitimate pride, where it can remain to indicate the starting point of a progress full of promise for the future, and the indisputable witness of a new service, to add to those which the manufacture has so often rendered to our national industry.

There are many other pieces which, although less perfect as ceramics, are remarkable works, of a size which has never until now been obtainable in Porcelaine Tendre, and the decoration of which does the greatest honor to the Sèvres artists. These are, among others, the Etruscan Vase (No. 383 of the special catalogue) decorated with jasmine and leaves by M. Lambert; the vase representing the vintage (No. 387), by M. Legrain; a vase of same form (No. 394), decorated with flowers, by M. Belet; a Lameire Vase (No. 379), by M. Belet also, and several others which we have not time to mention here.

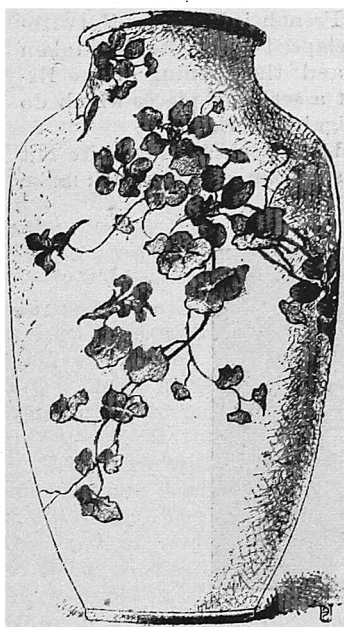
On this porcelain which gives to the colors and enamels their full value, M. Deck has applied to the beautiful surfaces tur-



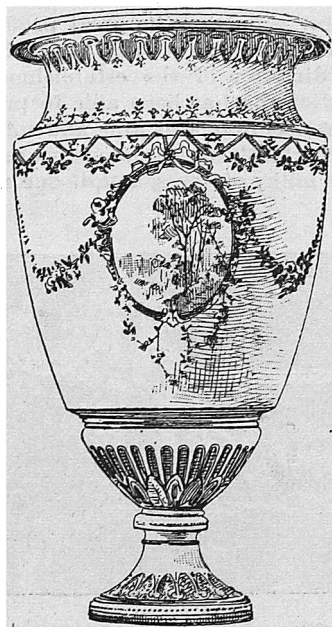
## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

quoise and celadon, which were the object of his previous researches; he has also renewed, making it form a more important part in decoration as a whole, the process of engraving under the glazing, which gives, by the accumulation of coloring matter in the engraved lines and the delicacy of this same matter on the reliefs, soft and harmonious colors. Among the most charming of these productions, we will mention particularly the plates composed and executed by M. Bonnuet (Nos. 413, 414, 423, etc.), and the vases by M. Lucas.

Less important perhaps as regards ceramics, but of an application equally practical, is Grosse Porcelaine some specimens of



SPECIMEN VASE.



VASE BULLANT, BY M. E. HALLION.

which were displayed for the first time under the central dome, and which seem to us likely to be of considerable service.

In creating this new sort of porcelain, M. Deck had a double aim in view to obtain a material the paste of which being more solid than that of faience or the ordinary porcelain could resist the variations of temperature and also be more easy to decorate; at the same time, he wished to give sufficient plasticity to the paste to enable artists to model directly on the pieces their decorative designs so as to preserve to their works all the charm and freedom of a personal work, without fearing that the nature of the subject be changed, which too often happens through the dangerous operations of moulding and repairing.

In speaking of this porcelain it is necessary to take into consideration that the vases which were shown at the Exposition were, as we have just said, the first of the kind from the Sèvres furnace; on some, the enamel lacks transparency and the tone



VASE SAIGON, BY M. GEBLEUX.



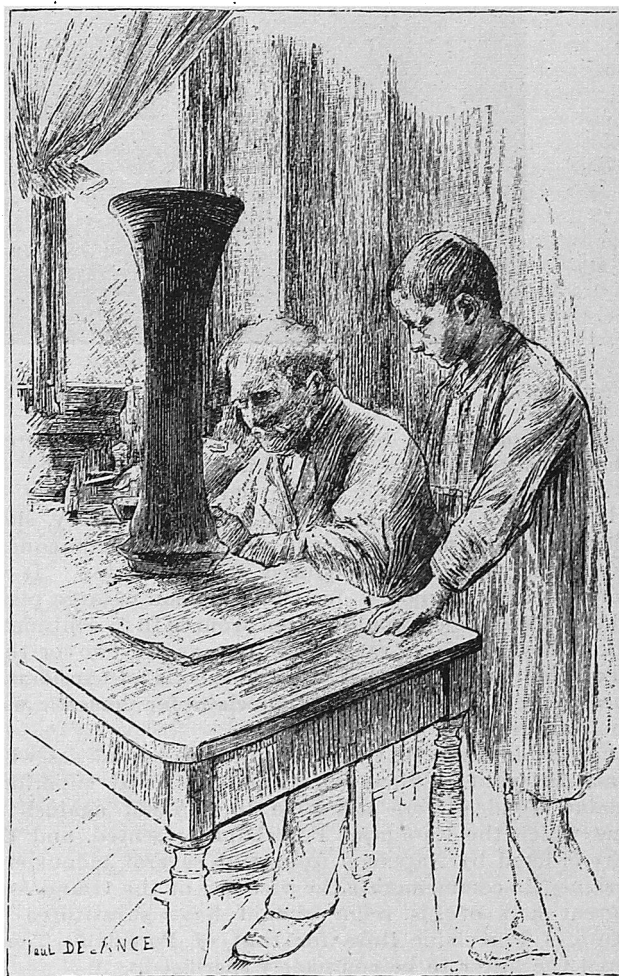
VASE SAIGON, PAR M. LUCAS.

is a little dull; on others, it is too liquid and has run in places, forming vitreous drops; but these are accidents inseparable from first attempts and which are easily remedied.

Porcelaine Dure is represented by a limited number of specimens, we mention chiefly the vases (Nos. 2, 3 and 5) decorated by M. Emile Belet with birds and flowers in reserved white upon a blue background without glazing. This process which gives

excellent results in the decoration of small pieces, seems not so suitable for large vases. Indeed, in order that a vase thus decorated may have the proper aspect and the proper effect, the background ought to be of rather a darker tone, the result is that the flowers and designs, reserved on the white of the porcelain, form with this dark blue background too strong a contrast, and when the decoration, as in the vases of which we speak, is composed of branches of flowers, wisteria, peonies, etc., the foliage having naturally to stand out boldly from the background, the artist is obliged to maintain the tone in such a degree that it almost becomes black; the modeling exists no longer; and the general appearance is dark and monotonous. To enliven it a little the leaves are modeled with high lights of gold, but this compulsory sort of modeling, by fine and delicate hatching, does not form an agreeable contrast with the general decoration which, by the very necessities of the process, ought to be rather boldly executed.

In the small pieces, on the contrary, we can cite as examples the remarkable porcelains exhibited by the royal manufactory of Copenhagen, the blue being softer, therefore more transparent,



WORKROOM FOR PUPILS.

and of a more delicate shade, the model is preserved in a harmonious tone, which is lightened here and there by a simple line of gold marking the outlines and producing a much more pleasing effect.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

On the 8th of December last the elegant store of Simpson Hall, Miller & Co., on the corner of 14th Street and University Place, was totally destroyed by fire. The loss was especially disastrous, coming as it did at the opening of the holiday trade, which to dealers in silver ware and like articles is always very heavy. Temporary quarters were, however procured, and the work of rebuilding on the old site was so vigorously prosecuted that the old friends of the fire will now have the pleasure of renewing acquaintance on May 1st, and of inspecting a beautiful line of entirely new designs. The new stock includes a great variety of repoussé work, embracing candelabra, tea sets, ice pitchers, trays, and in fact original designs in numbers of articles almost as innumerable as the sands on the shore.

We have no hesitation in referring our readers to Messrs. Palmer, Cunningham & Co., of Philadelphia, for tools of all kinds used in the industrial art. A little pamphlet just issued by the firm will be sent on application. Among others their blue trammel points and adjustable dividers with reversible caliper point will especially attract attention.